

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 019919

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, UK, BB, GJ

SUBJECT: GRENADAN INDEPENDENCE

REFERENCE: LONDON 1315

1. RICHARD SAMUELS, COUNSELOR UK EMBASSY, CALLED ON DIRECTOR, CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS, MORNING JANUARY 30 TO DISCUSS GRENADAN INDEPENDENCE. WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WAS ESSENTIALLY WHAT PRESTON HAD TOLD EMBOFF RE FORTHCOMING INDEPENDENCE OF GRENADA AS REPORTED REFTEL. HE ALSO LEFT COPY OF REVISED "FINAL" PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES WHICH HAD BEEN HANDED TO UK REP BAKER BY PREMIER GAIRY ON JANUARY 28. WHEN DEPTOFF EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT NEW PROGRAMME DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN 'CURTAILED' IN LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS WE HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE WAS GOING TO BE THE CASE, SAMUELS SAID THAT A FEW CEREMONIES HAD BEEN DROPPED BUT GAIRY HAD VIGOROUSLY RESISTED ANY FURTHER CUTS. THUS SCHEDULE STILL RUNS FROM FEBRUARY 3-10. SAMUELS VOLUNTEERED THAT HMG REPS HAD TRIED TO TALK GAIRY INTO HAVING

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SIMPLE CEREMONY ON FEBRUARY 7 WITH LATER MORE ELABORATE

OBSERVANCE SCHEDULED FOR SOME LATER DATE WHEN THE SITUATION HAD CALMED, BUT HE HAD REFUSED TO CONSIDER SUCH A SUGGESTION.

2. ON SUBJECT OF RESPECTIVE DELEGATIONS, SAMUELS CONFIRMED THAT UK WOULD BE REPRESENTED BY THE PRESENT UK GOVERNMENT

REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ASSOCIATED STATES, MICHAEL LAIRD, AND THEIR HIGH COMMISSIONER IN PORT OF SPAIN, CHRISTOPHER DIGGINES. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOW 'ALMOST CERTAIN' THAT NO ONE WOULD COME OUT FROM LONDON. DEPTOFF TOLD SAMUELS THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN REGARDING MAKE-UP OF OUR DELEGATION. WE HAD BEEN AWAITING LATEST INFORMATION FROM HMG AS TO THEIR PLANS AS WELL AS A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW EVENTS WERE TRENDING WITHIN GRENADA BEFORE TAKING A FINAL DECISION. WE WOULD CERTAINLY NOW TAKE INTO ACCOUNT HMG DECISION TO LIMIT DELEGATION TO LOCALLY-BASED REPRESENTATIVES IN DECIDING THE MAKE-UP OF OUR OWN DELEGATION.

3. ASKED ABOUT A BRITISH NAVAL PRESENCE IN VICINITY OF GRENADA, SAMUEL CONFIRMED THAT HMS BACCHANTE WAS WITHIN TWO HOURS STEAMING TIME OF THE ISLAND AND WOULD GO INTO PORT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INDEPENDENCE CEREMONIES. ONE OR MORE OTHER NAVAL VESSELS WOULD ALSO BE IN THE AREA AND AVAILABLE FOR EVACUATION OF FOREIGN NATIONALS SHOULD THAT BE NEEDED.

4. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING DEPTOFF ASKED IF HMG WOULD BE SPONSORING GRENADA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS AFTER INDEPENDENCE. SAMUELS SAID THAT THOUGH HE HAD NO RECENT AUTHORITY ON THIS POINT, IT WAS CERTAINLY CUSTOMARY FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM TO SPONSOR THE CANDIDACIES OF FORMER COLONIES AND HE COULD IMAGINE NO DEVIATION FROM THIS PRACTICE IN THE CASE OF GRENADA.

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